

GREY TOWERS LEGACY

Conservation • Community • Culture

SPRING • SUMMER 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

As the weather warms the Board of Directors recommits to our mission which is to assist the US Forest Service in the wise-use of Grey Towers National Historic Site.

Bill Dauer, GT Director, and Lori McKean, Forest Service Liaison, are both enjoying their retirements. We miss their presence and vitality.

Nonetheless, we persist. Forester Matthew Wesche is our US Forest Service Liaison. Historian, Brandon Bell, FS has been most prolific in providing a regular stream of historical Fun Facts about the Pinchot legacy and artifacts from the museum. The expert stewardship of staff Horticulturist Beth Hawke brings the return of plants and adds new ones.

The response to "The Growth of Trees—A Journey Through Time" by Michael Wojtech was outstanding! Two more lectures will be offered in July. The Laurel Hill Cemetery is maintained regularly and soon the Fire Tower will be a permanent attraction on the Discovery Trail.

Your continued support of our mission is greatly appreciated.

Marian Keegan



Grey Towers Horticulture Team

The Grey Towers Horticulture Team was started in 2002. This long-standing volunteer group was created and is supervised by Grey Towers Landscape Curator, Elizabeth Hawke.

This group of women and men with varying levels of experience in gardening meet every Wednesday morning and help maintain the Grey Towers gardens from April-November.

The Team has many long-standing members and is always welcoming new volunteers willing to get down in the dirt!

The Horticulture Team assists the Forest Service in maintaining the gardens that Cornelia Pinchot, Gifford Pinchot's wife designed. **The total yearly volunteer hours of this group equal that of a full-time employee!**

The Forest Service is fortunate to have such a dedicated team as it approaches its 20th anniversary.



MESSAGE FROM GREY TOWERS STAFF

"We congratulate Bill Dauer and Lori McKean on their well-deserved retirements and are pleased to announce that Dr. Tinelle Bustam, FS Director of Conservation Education, will serve as Acting Grey Towers Director.

We appreciate the continued support and partnership of the Heritage Association and the

patience and understanding of our valued visitors as we navigate these institutional changes as well as federal COVID-19 guidelines.

While current USDA Forest Service restrictions prohibit us from offering guided tours of the mansion, we have expanded our outdoor programming (11AM-3PM daily) and invite the public to enjoy the historic grounds

(main gate open 9AM-4:30PM daily). We have made the difficult decision to reschedule the 2021 Festival of Wood for August 2022.

Please visit our website fs.usda.gov/greytowers or call (570) 296-9630 when planning your visit for additional and updated information. We look forward to the 2021 visitor season and hope you will join us!"

Restoring one of the Pinchot Towers—Big Pocono Fire Tower

Like many activities last summer, the Big Pocono Fire Tower restoration was slowed but not stopped. Restoration activities were resumed in the Fall of 2020, beginning with the removal of the fire tower stairs and decking from the tower structure.

The three sections of stairs were disassembled, primed and painted, damaged steps replaced and the stairs were then reassembled. A team of metal fabricators/welders removed bent, altered and/or compromised original steel elements from the tower structure. Tower framing was repaired and compromised steel frame elements were replaced with new pieces that were fabricated.

A big part of our recent success and the future of the project was the offer by Sequoia Tree Service to help with the project. Sequoia was able to dig the footings before the weather this winter got too bad. Once spring arrived, Sequoia arranged for the pouring of the concrete footings.

The next step in the process will be to bolt the tower to the footings. This will take place once we have all the materials and the equipment

and people can come together at the same time. Again, Sequoia Tree Service has offered to help with the lifting process. The last step will be to connect the restored cab to the tower.

The Big Pocono Fire Tower was one of the first fire towers that Gifford Pinchot, as the Pennsylvania Commissioner of Forestry, approved for construction.

The Big Pocono Fire Tower was erected in 1921. Wouldn't it be nice to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Big Pocono Fire Tower with its re-erection as an educational resource at Grey Towers National Historic Site, describing the US Forest Service fire program, its history, Gifford's role, and fire suppression and management today?

Support for this project has been provided by the U.S. Forest Service; Grey Towers Heritage Association; Pennsylvania Department of



Pouring the footings.

Conservation and Natural Resources; HistoriCorps; Forest Fire Lookout Association; Pinchot Chapter Society of American Foresters; Gifford Pinchot Audubon Society, Sequoia Tree Service and many individual donors.

Also, a thank you goes out to the dedicated volunteers who have provided many hours of volunteer time. Any technical or financial support you would like to provide would be appreciated.

FUN FACT FRIDAY #46 The Courting Candle

To conclude our month-long showcase of artifacts from "Around the House," the Courting Candle featured here is an original Pinchot Family artifact and the subject of a historical legend. The artifact itself is a "spiral, iron-forged candleholder" that was "popular in Germany before being introduced to the American Colonies by the early Pennsylvania-German settlers." In addition to its spiral shape, the candleholder also featured a sliding mechanism to adjust the candle up or down to maximize its use.

According to American legend, the courting candle also proved useful for fathers when suitors for their daughters visited the home. As legend has it, when the candle burned to the top of its holder, the suitor's time with the young woman of the house expired for that evening. The father of the young woman could start the candle either lower or higher depending on his impressions of the suitor and could adjust the height of the candle depending on how the evening progressed. For example, "an acceptable suitor might find the candle placed higher in the holder," granting him a longer visit.

Although this is an original Pinchot Family piece, there is no evidence to suggest the Pinchot's practiced this legend, but like young lovers, we can dream.

Content & Photos: Grey Towers NHS, Fecht/Chicago Tribune, "Q: What is a courting candle?"



Cemetery Repairs, Research, Rehab Reveals Community Roots

In a letter to Grey Towers in September 2013 the writer provided the following concerning the Laurel Hill Cemetery. *"In my opinion it is disrespectful and disgraceful to leave the cemetery in the condition that it is currently in for those visiting the final resting place of their ancestors and some of the earliest settlers of the Milford area. I doubt Gifford Pinchot would be proud to see the condition of the cemetery where his grandparents and other family members are buried."*

The writer mentioned the three-foot-high weeds that covered the area, under the maintained entrance sign, and the cemetery not being safe for the public. I would like to report that after many hours of volunteer time and support from the US Forest Service staff at Grey Towers, the Laurel Hill Cemetery is looking much better. In fact, I think Gifford Pinchot would be happy with the current condition of the cemetery.

Working to reveal the past

Over the last ten years, many volunteers have worked to make the site an inviting part of the Grey Towers experience. Over time, the cemetery has experienced numerous storms that knocked down trees which often damaged many headstones and monuments and made visits to the site very difficult. Trees had to be removed and stumps ground down.

At one time, the vegetation was so overgrown that much of the area was not walkable and headstones

were hidden from view. There is a saying "many hands make for light work," and the efforts at Laurel Hill Cemetery reflect that saying; many volunteers have worked to tame the vegetation, reset headstones, repair monuments and discover lost headstones, addressing many of the concerns the writer pointed out.

Public access has also been addressed with the annual mowing of the main access roads and trails. In addition to improvements to the access roads, trails have been improved and mulched and a new perimeter trail has been developed. Three stone benches have also been added to make the walk through the cemetery a pleasant experience, where a person can stop and reflect.

Sharing the story

Another goal was to tell the story of Laurel Hill Cemetery. We have worked to accomplish this goal by providing interpretative signs to help visitors with their visit to the cemetery.

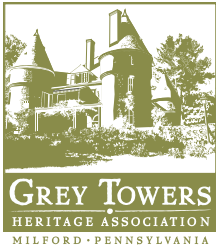
There are two large entrance signs as you enter the cemetery. One new sign is a map of the grave sites with the names of those who are buried within the cemetery. A brochure has been developed that provides background information on the cemetery, and discusses the way it has changed over time.

Walking tours have been provided with experts on hand to explain gravestone symbolism and epitaphs and to talk about restoration and research efforts.

Dramatic interpretive programs have been provided based on the research on those buried in the cemetery.

If you would like to be part of the efforts to restore and maintain the Laurel Hill Cemetery, you can donate you time or dollars, see how, by visiting the Grey Towers Heritage Association website.





greytowers.org



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OUR MISSION

To assist the US Forest Service in education, improvements, promotion, conservation and wise use of Grey Towers National Historic Site, Milford, PA.

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UPCOMING SEMINARS — *Details at greytowers.org*

July 10 at 3PM

Tracking Changes in the Arctic Tundra

Presenter: Dr. Fred Huemrich

Atmospheric temperatures are rising twice as fast in the Arctic as the average global temperature. Rising temperatures are changing the tundra environment. Learn about the unique tools that are being used to gather data.

July 30 at 3PM

Climate, Food, Farms, and Forests: A 'Wildlands and Woodlands' Approach

Presenter: Dr. Brian Donahue

A wide range of "natural climate solutions" have been proposed linking how we eat and house ourselves with how we manage our farms and forests. This talk will discuss various solutions.

Become a Member

We invite you to join Grey Towers Heritage Association in partnership with the US Forest Service at Grey Towers National Historic Site to continue the Pinchot Legacy by becoming a member of Grey Towers Heritage Association (GTHA).

Benefits of Membership

- Help Preserve the Grey Towers Estate
- Help Support Public Programs
- Help Tell the Pinchot Conservation Story
- Help Strengthen the Community Connection

Membership Levels

- **Individual Associate: \$30** (Senior \$25/Student \$10)
- **Associate Household: \$50** (Helps support tree plantings in a National Forest)
- **Patron: \$250 plus Annual Tour Pass**
- **Sponsor: \$500/Annual Tour Pass**
- **Sustainer: \$1,000/Annual Tour Pass**

Grey Towers Heritage Association Welcomes Volunteers

There are many Volunteer Opportunities available:

- Mansion and Garden Tours
- Special Events
- Gift Shop
- Conservation Education
- Landscape and Gardens
- Trails
- Cemetery Restoration
- Fire Tower Restoration

And much more!

Go to GreyTowers.org for an application and more information on volunteering.

NEW! Need a gift? Give the gift of a GTHA Membership!

You may join us through our website GreyTowers.org